

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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MY LEGACY.

They told me I was heir. I turned in haste,
And ran to seek my treasure,
And wondered as I ran how it was placed,—
If I should find a measure
Of gold, or if the titles of fair lands
And houses would be laid within my hands.

I journeyed many roads, I knocked at gates,
I spoke to each wayfarer
I met, and said: "A heritage awaits
Me. Art not thou the bearer
Of news? Some message sent to me whereby
I learn which way my new possessions lie?"

Some asked me in; naught lay beyond their
door;
Some smiled, and would not tarry,
But said that men were just behind who bore
More gold than I could carry.
And so the morn, the noon, the day, were
spent,
While empty-handed up and down I went.

At last one cried, whose face I could not see,
As through the mists he hasted,
"Poor child, what evil ones have hindered
thee

Till this whole day is wasted?
Hath no man told thee that thou art joint
heir
With one named Christ, who waits the goods
to share?"

The one named Christ I sought for many
days,
In many places vainly.
I heard men name his name in many ways,
I saw his temples plainly.
But they who named him most gave me no
sign
To find him by or prove the heirship mine.

And, when at last I stood before his face,
I knew him by no token.
Save subtle air of joy which filled the place,
Our greeting was not spoken.
In solemn silence I received my share,
Kneeling before my brother and "joint heir."

My share! No deed of house or spreading
lands,
As I had dreamed. No measure
Heaped up with gold: my elder brother's
hands
Had never held such treasure.
Foxes have holes and birds in nests are fed,
My brother had not where to lay his head.

My share! The right like him to know all
pain
Which hearts are made for knowing;
The right to find in loss the surest gain,
To reap my joy from sowing
In bitter tears; the right with him to keep
A watch by day and night with all who weep.

My share! To-day men call it grief and
death,
I see the joy and life to-morrow.
I thank our Father with my every breath
For this sweet legacy of sorrow.
And through my tears I call to each, "Joint
heir
With Christ, make haste to ask him for thy
share."
H. H.

No one can cherish an ideal, and devote
himself to its realization from year to year,
and strive and struggle and make sacrifices
for its attainment, without undergoing a
certain gracious transformation, of which
the highest powers must be aware and men
can hardly miss.—*John White Chadwick.*

OUR TROUBLES.

We all are beset by troubles throughout our lives. The strange thing is that nearly every one is convinced that his own are especially severe and overwhelming and that fate has dealt more unkindly with him than with his kith and kin.

We all feel as though we should be consulted as to the kind of troubles which should be imposed upon us. We are willing to accept one kind, but we rebel against another as unendurable and unmerited.

As a fact it certainly seems as though we often have to endure just the one kind of trouble which we are the least fitted to cope with and which seems hardest for us. We cry out against this fate. We should, we feel, have been a heroine under almost any other trial. Our heel of Achilles has been pierced, our armor hit in its vulnerable spot. We are reluctant to admit that this may be done with a purpose. We do not remember how in our school-days when one study had been mastered we were given another harder and new to us, which roused us to fresh exertions.

We do not think of the college student who cannot obtain his degree until he has shown himself proficient in examination on many lines. The men in college who obtain the highest degrees are those who have moved on from one study to another until the most difficult has not proved beyond their powers.

Is it not possible that we are only carrying out after all the curriculum laid down in life's plan—by Providence? This sort of trouble in which we are proficient can be given us no longer.

Perhaps the acceptance of our trials would be easier if we could endure them with this belief. We often try to escape them altogether. We feel as if by taking precautions we could avoid most of them, as children endeavor to escape scarlet fever. The fact is that while endeavoring to escape one set of troubles we are quite likely to run into another. The effort made to escape may prove a trouble in itself.

Philosophy, resignation, and common sense are the best medicines when the trouble is inevitable, but many are of our own making and need not exist, just as preventive medicines now avert disease. There are many troubles which need not be accepted, if we use decision and a firm will and refuse to admit them when they knock at our doors. This is a delightful idea,—if we can refuse admittance to some and prevent the approach of others, life *seems easier*. Yes!

but we cannot escape all, and we must square our shoulders and face many a trial which is nearly unendurable, and which no "prevention" will prevent and no common sense dismiss. These are the real troubles. They seem to come often when we are least able to meet them, when our strength is at its minimum. We had met their approach with courage and cheer, but their stay has been too long,—courage has flagged, cheerfulness has deserted us, and we cry out that our strength is at an end. Still they linger, and as we grow weaker they grow stronger.

Alas! too many of us know the truth of all this.

Let us lie down, *cease* to resist, even allow ourselves to be a little overwhelmed. Then when we have "touched bottom," so to speak, let us lie quiet and think. Sometimes a new courage comes with this quiet, peaceful period of thought. At first we see our lives in utter darkness, but as our eyes grow accustomed to the darkness we see a dim ray of light. We watch it unconsciously at first, then become aware that we are watching it, then fix our minds upon it. It may be a line of light under a door, and if we open the door it may lead to a lighted entry and by making our way down that little hall we may discover a door which opens outward. That door may lead us into a new future; it may solve our problems.

Perhaps the troubles cannot be escaped, but that open door may bring in a flood of light and greater endurance, fresher air, new suggestions, and finally, though the troubles are there, we may suddenly find we are stronger than they, our life has enlarged until the space they occupy seems suddenly very small. There is room for them to remain, but we notice them less and less; perhaps some day when we look for them we shall cry out at finding they are gone and we did not notice their departure! Indeed, the very bigness of this trial may make all future trouble seem little and of small moment.

Certainly many of the faces around us who wear the look of greatest serenity are those who have borne the heaviest trials and proved themselves strong enough to come out of their ordeals conquerors, not conquered.

There are some trials so heavy that they may crush us if we do not put forth all our strength and hold them off, yet the strength thus gained may make us stronger for all time. We shall never be the same as before the great ordeal; life will always seem more fraught with possibilities of suffering. We may even carry scars all our lives, but

honorable scars, which we need have no cause to conceal.

Our friends, even our nearest and dearest, may never have known of the conflict,—the struggle may have been our secret, and we have only received criticism and censure for irritability, depression, or self-absorption, while we needed the warm handgrasp of sympathy and appreciation, yet could not tell our need. We may have been driven to keeping apart from friends, knowing well the criticism, and overwhelmed by the desire to explain what we knew could not be explained.

Often in such dire needs comes a strange unlooked-for blessing. It may come from a wonderful new interest or talent, discovered unexpectedly and developed then, which will never leave us and will enrich our lives. We may turn from men to nature and find in her a soothing power which we never before realized. Alone in the fields and woods, lying out under the trees listening to the wind in the branches over our heads, we may find a panacea and rest which will bring back courage and strength; we may learn to probe nature's secrets, her flowers, her birds, the course of the winds, the movements of the clouds; then, "gazing on the wide horizon's boundless rim," our own life grows small in her limitless spaces.

New talents may develop to stifle thought, new friends come into our lives. We may find comfort in familiar hymns and sermons which once we thought meaningless.

New trials develop a sense of proportion. What once seemed large now assume their proper size. Dealing with life's larger issues may make small annoyances no longer count as trials.

Life is on a larger scale, and on that scale may be developed a greater charity for those around.

In mountain-climbing have we not all known that the part which has been the hardest is not the gay excited start when we ran eagerly forward, mounting with elastic step, not the half-way rest which seemed a glad surprise, but a spot far on when our strength began to slacken, our courage to lessen? There is no sign of the nearness to the summit and no opportunity to turn back. "Why did we start? It is a far harder climb than we had expected," we murmur to ourselves. We set our teeth, grow silent yet determined. We move more slowly. Yet if we persevere comes a suddenly glad surprise, a light under the trees, a ray of sunlight aslant across the boughs, the first sign we are nearing our goal; then an open glade, a glimpse of a

wider sky line, a distant blurred view of the opposite horizon, and then the wonderful, glorious prospect opens before us and all else is forgotten as we gaze in wonder and see the wide plains beneath us. When our courage was at its lowest, we were nearer the goal than we suspected. So it often is in life,—just as the troubles which had seemed too overwhelming may be the last struggle, and we may be nearer the end than we had suspected. This may be the last test of our endurance. Let us take fresh courage.

Those whose lives are passed in quiet valleys and in peaceful monotony may often be envied by their struggling brethren, but they will never know the sense of victory, the added sense of power, which comes from life's conflicts and which must (if we can but take this point of view) to some extent reconcile us to what we have endured. There are many, alas! who can never feel the glow of thankfulness; their trials were never over, they never reached the mountain summits nor saw the smiling valley lying beneath them. Their lives ended in the trials of the struggle; they never saw the sunlight across the topmost branches of their climbing path. Their strength failed; they lived ever on the mountain-side in the steepness and the darkness, and death found them there, perhaps embittered with life and with a sense of misfortune which made the acceptance of their fate the harder.

Others there are whose lives are just a dull monotony, no hope of reaching the summit, no mountain climb of expectancy. The fault may not be theirs; circumstances may have been relentless and not to be escaped. Life was always fatigue, anxiety, and worry for them, and there was no change. The end was like the beginning. Perhaps such lives need our compassion and receive it less than any others. Such people are often as uninteresting, unresponsive, hopeless, as their surroundings. What can we say to them? What can we do for them? There is no crisis, their pride asks no relief, our smiles meet no return.

If the secrets of life are revealed to our questions, at some future day may not the meaning of such lives be one of the riddles we first hope to solve? The only comfort we can find here in our pity for them is the thought that perhaps what seems to us so unendurable may not be quite so tragic to them. The burden they carry may from long habit be less weighty than it looks to the observer, and there may be some hidden springs of comfort and enjoyment which we in our sympathy cannot imagine.

Much as we dislike our troubles, we must,

at least, admit that they lead us to a greater charity for those around us. They should remind us of the hymn, so true for all time:—

“Judge not! the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see.
What seems to thy dim eyes a stain
In God's pure light may only be
A scar brought from some well-known field
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.”

—A. B. Coolidge.

THE STILL HOUR.

Calm me, my God, and keep me calm,
While these hot breezes blow;
Be like the night-dew's cooling balm
Upon earth's fevered brow.

Yes, keep me calm, though loud and rude
The sounds my ear that greet,—
Calm in the closet's solitude,
Calm in the bustling street.

Calm in my hour of buoyant health,
Calm in my hour of pain;
Calm in my poverty or wealth,
Calm in my loss or gain.

Calm in the sufferance of wrong,
Like Him who bore my shame;
Calm 'mid the threatening, taunting throng
Who hate thy holy name.

Calm as the ray of sun or star,
Which storms assail in vain;
Moving unruffled through earth's war,
The eternal calm to gain.

—H. Bonar.

Let him that would move the world move first himself. He that would do good to men begins with what tools God gives him, and gets more as the world gets on. It asks neither wealth nor fame, to live out a noble life. Make thy light thy life; thy thought, action; others will come round. Thou askest a place to stand on hereafter and move the world. Take it where thou standest, and begin now. So the work shall go forward. Reform thy little self, and thou hast begun to reform the world. . . . The first duty that God demands of men is that they be faithful, each man to his own nature, and each woman to hers, to respect it, to discipline it to its proper manner, and to use it in well-proportioned life. If I fail in that, I fail in everything besides. Gain what else I may, the gain is of small consequence; I have lost my own soul.

In the light of the absolute, every idea becomes worth studying; in that of the infinite, every existence worth respecting; in that of the divine, every creature worth loving.—*Amiel's Journal*.

O God, our Father, good beyond all that is good, fair beyond all that is fair, in whom are calmness, peace, and concord, heal thou the divisions which separate us from one another, and bring us back into a unity of love which may bear some likeness to thy blessed nature. Make us one in the fellowship of a good mind, through that peace of thine which maketh all things peaceful, and through the grace, mercy, and tenderness wherewith thou, O Lord, art our Father for ever and ever. *Amen*.

What is “God's kingdom,” which we pray may come? “The kingdom of God,” says the apostle, “is not meat nor drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy spirit.” It is the reign of goodness on earth, of truth and love, of honesty, generosity, purity, temperance, patience.

This one central petition in the Master's prayer would, if we kept to its meaning and spirit, correct false aims, false prayers, and keep us always in close union with him.

Many people suppose that the kingdom of God is only in the other world. They hope to go to heaven hereafter, but do not expect heaven to come here. This world, they think, is only evil, and always must be so. Thus their highest hope is to go to heaven: they never expect heaven to come to them.

But Jesus, in his prayer, went up to a far higher realm of thought than this. Heaven is wherever God's will is done; and his great wish and purpose, the great aim of his life, was that God's will should be done here in this world. He saw the cruelties and wickedness of this world, the sins of men, the crimes, calamities, disasters which surround us. Yet he cherished the unfaltering hope that this world might and must become heaven, that good might and must overcome evil; that crime, vice, sin, are transient, and only good is permanent. This hope for man he has embodied in our daily prayer. He has taught us to pray for this arrival of all-conquering goodness. He has taught the world to say every day that God's will can be done here as perfectly as in the highest realm of spiritual bliss, that there are no angels or archangels anywhere in the universe who are more pure and holy than men may become in this world.—*James Freeman Clarke*.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed here.

OFFERS.

The following books are offered by Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass. Wells' "Science of Common Things"; "Fourteen Weeks in Chemistry," Steele; "English into French," Williams; Mark's "First Lessons in Geometry"; "Natural Philosophy," Peck's Gano; "United States and Peace," Ex-President Taft; "Elementary Algebra," Hagar; "Corinne" (French). Miss Decker has also 22 bound volumes of *Appleton's Journal* from April, 1869, to December, 1879, which she will send to any one willing to pay half the cost of freight.

A German Bible is offered by Mrs. D. V. Scott, 52 Warren Place, Montclair, New Jersey.

The Brighton Branch, Mrs. C. L. Murdock, 320 Allston Street, Coolidge Corner, Mass., offers *The National Geographic Magazine*, 1915-16; *Good Housekeeping*, 1916; *The Country Gentleman*, 1916; *The American Architect*, 1909; *Munsey's Magazine*, 1915; *Cosmopolitan*, 1916; *Everybody's*, 1916; *American Magazine*, 1916.

REQUESTS.

1. I should be glad of some good reading matter suitable for my husband and myself, and the *Cheerful Letter*; and I should appreciate some scraps for quilts. I send for reference the name of Rev. D. J. Bryant, Floyd, Virginia. Mrs. D. F. Stockwell, Christiansburg, Virginia.

2. Mrs. Polly Sigmon, Elamsville, Virginia, asks for light reading.

3. I want to thank all who have sent me books and magazines. I have enjoyed them so much. I should be very grateful if some one would send me *The Christian Herald*, a good dictionary, "The Calling of Dan Matthews"; or any good reading will be appreciated. I should be glad if some one would send me the *Cheerful Letter*. Mrs. Mollie A. Lancaster, R. 2, Pizarro, Virginia.

4. Years ago I joined your society and received much cheer from you until my

health failed and I could no longer write. Now I am quite well and all alone in my old home, and should be so glad if you will take me back and send me reading matter again to help pass the lonely hours. Mrs. Ellen Pedigo, Vinton, Virginia.

5. Will you please send me scraps for patchwork? Any cotton, silk, or velvet scraps will be appreciated. I should also like to receive the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Mrs. M. E. Marley, Tomahawk, North Carolina.

6. I am a farmer's wife, eight miles from the nearest town. I am the mother of three dear little boys, aged eight, five, and two years; two girls, aged twelve and ten. I enjoy reading very much, but do not have a great amount to read. If you can send me the *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, "The Christian Doctrine of Prayer," either or both, I should be very grateful. My oldest girl, aged twelve, has tuberculosis and is at the State Sanatorium; has been there for four months, and will not be well enough to leave for some time yet. If you could send her reading-cards, or a letter occasionally, I know she would greatly appreciate it. She can't help being lonely as she knew no one there. She has seen none of her people except me since going there. Her address is Myrtle Lee, Sanatorium, North Carolina. My health is very bad. Doctors have advised that I do not go out any for a year, at least. I should be very grateful for any reading for the children or picture-books or cards. The oldest boy, aged eight, is a great reader. He reads or wants read to him every story-book he can get; has had "Black Beauty" read to him three times and wanted me to start back through it again last night as soon as I had finished. Any reading for any of the family will be thankfully received. Mrs. S. B. Lee, Polkton, R.D. 2, North Carolina.

7. Mrs. Nannie Newkirk and three children, aged seven, six, and four, would like something to read, either books or magazines. Wilmer Newkirk, aged twelve years, would like the *Youth's Companion*. Address Kerr, North Carolina, R.F.D.

8. E. Mae Beach, Cañon City, Colorado, asks for a condensed History of the World.

9. Mrs. Allie L. Wilkins, Madison, North Carolina, longs to hear from Miss Mabel White (her last letter to Miss White was returned). The Wilkins family has moved

to a lonely spot a mile from the mail box, and will greatly enjoy any reading, especially *Woman's Home Companion*.

10. Mrs. Kate Hale, Roxbury, Ohio, our old-time friend and shut-in has not had any reading for some time and longs for it.

11. Mrs. Arch Brewer, Ansonville, North Carolina, asks for light reading, either magazines, papers, or books; also, would be glad to receive pieces for patchwork.

12. Miss P. C. Higginbotham, Sandidges, Virginia, asks for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and quilt pieces.

13. I want to tell the Cheerful Letter Exchange sisters how very much we have appreciated the reading formerly received and would certainly appreciate any reading you may wish to send, and also scraps for patchwork. We get very lonely here amid the mountains. Mrs. W. R. and Miss Annie Eanes, Bassett, Virginia, R.F.D. 1.

14. Will you please publish my sincere thanks to my *Cheerful Letter* friends for the valuable reading they have sent me during the winter, and a request for some of Theodore Roosevelt's books? Rev. D. J. Bryant, Floyd, Virginia.

15. A dictionary and story books for a small girl are wanted by Miss Alberta Richardson, Wadesboro, North Carolina, R. 1, Box 81.

16. Anna Bonine, Ironsburg, Tennessee, wants anything suitable for a little girl eight years of age.

17. Miss Edith McCauley, Pelzer, R. 4, South Carolina, is very lonely and longs for magazines and books to read, and will appreciate the kindness of the friends sending them.

18. Miss E. Trevey, Harold, Virginia, will be eighteen the 29th of June, and asks for post-cards on that date. She would also like *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies' World*.

19. Miss Lillie D. Eads, Monticello, Kentucky, writes she has not heard anything from the *Cheerful Letter* for two years and will be glad of reading.

20. Ruth Herring, Vulcan, Virginia, asks for reading.

21. James L. Pearson, Boomer, North Carolina, writes he is not so much in need for himself as formerly, but is trying to get together a library for a backwoods community, and will be very glad of suitable books and magazines.

22. *Woman's Home Companion*, 1917, is asked for by Mrs. D. E. Howse, Nadine, New Mexico.

23. I have a small class of students under my care and need a few reference books for my own use: general history of Rome, Greece, England; psychology; advanced Latin; Greek grammars; Latin-English Lexicon. If you have anything along these lines that can be spared, I shall be most grateful. Failing these, any of the poets may be substituted. I am asking a great deal, it is true; but use your own discretion in selecting. I am teaching to add to my income a little. Three evenings a week are taken up. Nine students, all special work. So you will see why I need some outside help. William A. Alleyn, Gary, Indiana, Route B. Express or freight, American, Ross, Indiana.

24. Mrs. Gertrude Gamble, Box 43-B, Britton, Oklahoma, will be glad of magazines. She writes: "I am a great lover of good literature."

25. Mrs. A. DeWitt, Springfield, Missouri, will be very glad of good reading.

26. Mrs. Millie B. Jackson, Ransom, Kansas, will be glad of reading and a correspondent.

27. Mr. M. D. Burford, Waugh, Virginia, with his six children aged from ten to twenty-one years, will be thankful for good reading. His wife, Mrs. Julia B. Burford, passed on in January.

28. Myra Dodd, Sandidges, R. D. 2, Virginia, will be glad of "Ben Hur," "St. Elmo," "Ruby's Reward," or "Sweetapple Core."

29. I should be glad to get the *Cheerful Letter*, also books and magazines, especially little story books for children. We have seven, the oldest a boy fifteen years old, a girl twelve; five have been going to school this winter. I should like to get "In His Steps" (I don't remember the writer's name). I read it years ago, but want to read it again and loan it to others. Mrs. J. H. Bondurant, The Hollow, Virginia.

30. Mrs. Lettie Nelson, Sandy Ridge, North Carolina, R. D. 1, will be glad of reading for herself and family.

31. As it has been some time since I have received any reading from the *Cheerful Letter* I should be very glad if some one would send me the *Pictorial Review* beginning at January, 1917. When I get through reading them I will pass them on to one of my girl friends. Miss Dovie M. Turner, R. 1, Box 10, Dodson, Virginia.

32. Miss Rose Swecker of Foster Falls, Virginia, would appreciate books, and pieces or patchwork, as she is left with her blind father to care for. Her mother died when he was a child; she is now sixteen. She has learned to crochet, and any scraps of thread would be gratefully received.

33. Mrs. Helen M. Warner, Mont Vernon, New Hampshire, wants especially *Hearst's Magazine* for May, 1915.

34. Mrs. R. McInnis, Rogers, Arkansas, R. F. D. 3, will be glad of good reading for herself and husband.

35. Mrs. Eva Collins, Blakely, Georgia, is very grateful for the reading that has been sent her and hopes to be remembered in the future.

36. Mrs. Sue E. Dodson, Latham, Arkansas, will be glad of the *Cheerful Letter* and reading.

37. Miss Vesu Cofer, Lookela, Oklahoma, R. 3, will be glad of good reading.

38. Mrs. L. J. Harmard, Wadesboro, North Carolina, R. D. 2, Box 45, with seven small children, the oldest eleven years, asks for stories and pictures for them.

39. I live in a very small town, very lonely. Should like letters, also books for children. Should like very much to receive any magazines. Mrs. G. A. Smith, Lazare, Texas.

40. Rothschild Francis, conductor of the Excelsior Literary Club, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin West Indies, would like to receive these two books,—Seeley's "History of Education," and Bain's "Deductive and Inductive Logic." Mr. Francis lost his small library in the hurricane which visited the island in 1916.

THE MOTHER'S COUNCIL.

HOW TO TREAT THE LITTLE GIRL WHO SLAPPED HER NURSE. THE EDITOR'S PRESCRIPTION.

I have not always been very fortunate in receiving answers to questions in this department of the *Cheerful Letter*. I will therefore answer this one myself.

When the hour came for the bedtime talk, the mother should take her little girl lovingly in her arms and say, "I know my darling is very sorry for one thing that happened; you did not think what your little hands were doing when you struck Sarah. I know you did not mean to strike her. I am not angry with you, nor even displeased, for I know you did not mean to strike her. But it would be a dreadful thing if mamma did not help her little girl to learn self-control long before she grows up." Children are apt to think that when they grow up, self-control will come of itself, but it is not so. There are men and women now who would give anything if they had been helped when they were little to govern their temper. What would be the best way? Would it not be best every time that you lose your temper to give up some pleasure? I think this would help you to remember better than anything else. Suppose that to-morrow you leave your doll in the trunk, and do not take her with you in the train. Then, whenever you think of her, you will be reminded why she is not there. The next day you will enjoy her very much more because you did not have her for one day.

A child of Lola's type would be almost sure to say "Yes." When her mother is kissing her good-night she should say, "You are a good girl to want to cure your faults; your mamma will always help you."

I do not say that this is the best method for every child, but for one like Lola, the nervous, conscientious kind, I am sure it is much better than scolding or blame or severe punishment.

L. F. C.

It is a change of ideals that is needed; a simplification of all living; a refusal to own any good which cannot be shared, and the solemn purpose to make larger life possible, not only for those who crave it, but for those who may even reject it.

—Helen Campbell.

Ignorance when voluntary is criminal.

—Dr. Anandabai Joshee.

NATURAL HISTORY.

AN UNDERGROUND FLOWER.

The stroller in the May woods will well remember those mauve-winged blooms among the moss that seem to flutter in the breeze, like a brood of tiny purple butterflies with fringy tails, or in a sheltered nook appear to have settled in a swarm among the winter-green leaves. "False winter-green" the plant is commonly called, its leaves bearing a slight resemblance to those of the aromatic checkerberry.

It is one of our oddest and prettiest spring flowers; in its very singular shape quite suggesting an orchid, with its two spreading petals and deep lavender-colored tasselled sleeve. But, indeed, it has long been laughing at us in that sleeve, as we have brought away its flowers from the woods, while we left its rarest and most important bloom behind us.

For the little *polygala* found out long ago that some means must be adopted to keep its foothold in the woods, so many were the eager hands that culled it every year. And so it formed a little plan to anchor itself in its home beyond the reach of bouquet hunters, offering one posy for the boutonnière, and another for mother earth—one playful flower for the world, another for serious use and posterity. But for this cunning resource, I fear our pretty *polygala* would have been exterminated in many of its haunts. Let us lose no time to seek the purple broods in the woods, and gracefully acknowledge our humility. These pale, pouch-like underground flowers are not beautiful to look at, but they plant the mould with seeds every year, and thus perpetuate the purple beds of bloom.—*William Hamilton Gibson, in Sharp Eyes.*

MICHAEL: THE DOG THAT SAVED A BRAVE SOLDIER'S LIFE.

Attached to a French command was a dog named Michael, larger, stronger, more intelligent than the others and of a gentle nature that made him a general favorite. Michael, although most "sociable," centred his particular affections upon a young French soldier named Henri. Every day at the soup hour Michael would appear carrying a tin can and place it beside Henri, who would fill it as he did his own, and they would dine together.

The day came, however, when Henri failed to return, and as the men stumbled back again to safety Michael scanned, with anx-

ious eyes, each pale, haggard face, his sensitive nostrils quivering with dread.

When the last man had been accounted for and Henri was still missing the animal darted toward the battlefield and after some time returned, greatly excited and carrying an old half-glove which belonged to his friend. He could scarcely wait for the attendants to bring a litter before he started off again, his great, intelligent eyes imploring them to hurry.

In a remote part of the field they found the young fellow lying still and cold. After a hasty examination the attendants left him for dead, hurrying away to succor the living, but Michael refused to be convinced. Again and again he returned for assistance, but in vain, so he mounted his solitary guard, his face almost humanly expressive of grief.

The attack took place about sundown, and it was not until late that night that a comparative quiet settled down upon the trenches.

Suddenly the moon flashed from behind a cloud, and the alert sentinel peered sharply about, then brought his rifle swiftly to his shoulder.

Not twenty feet away, creeping slowly towards the trenches, but halting abruptly every minute, loomed a large, dark object. The sentry advanced cautiously, finger on trigger, demanding curtly, "Who goes there?" followed by the stifled exclamation, "Michael!"

Michael it was, gasping, panting, but still the same old dog Michael—but not alone. Behind him, parts of his uniform literally torn away by the dog's teeth, lay Henri, dragged from the battlefield, inch by inch, by the devoted animal. And, miracle of miracles, the boy was actually breathing.

How the animal had accomplished such a Herculean task and escaped the vigilant eyes of the field attendants will forever remain a mystery, but suffice to say that little, fragile-looking Henri ultimately recovered, to challenge death once more at the front.—*Our Dumb Animals.*

Who waits until the wind shall silent keep
Will never find the ready hour to sow.
Who watcheth clouds will have no time to reap.

At day dawn plant thy seed, and be not slow
At night. God doth not slumber take not sleep.

Which seed shall prosper thou canst never know.

—*Helen Hunt.*

CHILDREN'S CLASSICS.

THE UGLY DUCKLING.

(Continued from last number.)

This hut was so dilapidated that it did not know on which side it should fall; and that's why it remained standing. The storm whistled round the duckling in such a way that the poor creature was obliged to sit down, to stand against it; and the tempest grew worse and worse. Then the duckling noticed that one of the hinges of the door had given way, and the door hung so slanting that the duckling could slip through the crack into the room; and it did so.

Here lived a woman, with her tomcat and her hen. And the tomcat, whom she called Bonnie, could arch his back and purr; he could even give out sparks; but for that he had to stroke his fur the wrong way. The hen had quite little short legs, and therefore she was called Chickabiddy-short-thanks; she laid good eggs, and the woman loved her as her own child.

In the morning the strange duckling was at once noticed, and the tomcat began to purr, and the hen to cluck. "What's this?" said the woman, and looked all round; but he could not see well, and therefore she thought the duckling was a fat duck that had strayed. "This is a rare prize!" she said. "Now I shall have duck's eggs. I hope it is not a drake. We must try that." And so the duckling was admitted on trial for three weeks; but no eggs came. And the tomcat was master of the house, and the hen was the lady, and always said, "We find the world!" for she thought they were all the world, and by far the better half. The duckling thought one might have a different opinion, but the hen would not allow it.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked. "No." Then you'll have the goodness to hold your tongue"; and the tomcat said, "Can you curve your back, and purr, and give out sparks?" "No." "Then you cannot have my opinion of your own, when sensible people are speaking!"

And the duckling sat in a corner and was melancholy; then the fresh air and the sunshine streamed in, and it was seized with such a strange longing to swim on the water that it could not help telling the hen of it. "What are you thinking of?" cried the hen. "You have nothing to do, that's why you have these fancies. Purr, or lay eggs, and they will pass over."

"But it is so charming to swim on the water!" said the duckling. "So refreshing

to let it close above one's head, and to dive down to the bottom!" "Yes, that must be a mighty pleasure, truly," quoth the hen. "I fancy you must have gone crazy. Ask the cat about it,—he's the cleverest animal I know,—ask him if he likes to swim on the water, or to dive down: I won't speak about myself. Ask our mistress, the old woman; no one in the world is cleverer than she! Do you think she has any desire to swim, and to let the water close above her head?"

"I think I will go out into the wide world!" said the duckling.

"Yes, do go," replied the hen.

And the duckling went away. It swam on the water, and dived, but it was slighted by every creature because of its ugliness. One evening—the sun was setting—there came a whole flock of great handsome birds out of the bushes; they were dazzlingly white, with long flexible necks; they were swans. They uttered a very peculiar cry, spread forth their glorious great wings, and flew away from that cold region to warmer lands, to fair open lakes! They mounted so high, so high, and the ugly little duckling felt quite strangely as it watched them. It turned round and round in the water, like a wheel, stretched out its neck towards them, and uttered such a strange loud cry as frightened itself. Oh! it could not forget those beautiful, happy birds; and so soon as it could see them no longer, it dived down to the very bottom, and when it came up again, it was quite beside itself. It knew not the name of those birds, and knew not whither they were flying; but it loved them more than it had ever loved any one. It was not at all envious of them. How could it think of wishing to possess such loveliness as they had? It would have been glad if only the ducks would have endured its company—the poor ugly creature!

And the winter grew cold, very cold! The duckling was forced to swim about in the water, to prevent the surface from freezing entirely; but every night the hole in which it swam about became smaller and smaller. It froze so hard that the icy covering cracked again; and the duckling was obliged to use its legs continually to prevent the hole from freezing up. At last it became exhausted, and lay quite still, and thus froze fast into the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant passed by; when he saw what had happened, he took his wooden shoe, broke the ice crust to pieces, and carried the duckling home to his wife. Then it came to itself again. The

children wanted to play with it; but the duckling thought they would do it an injury; and in its terror fluttered up into the milk-pail, so that the milk spurted down into the room. The woman clasped her hands, at which the duckling flew down into the butter-tub, and then into the meal-barrel and out again. How it looked then! The woman screamed, and struck at it with the fire-tongs; the children tumbled over one another, in their efforts to catch the duckling; and they laughed and screamed finely! Happily, the door stood open, and the poor creature was able to slip out between the shrubs into the newly fallen snow; and there it lay quite exhausted.

But it would be too melancholy if I were to tell all the misery and care which the duckling had to endure in the hard winter. It lay out on the moor among the reeds, when the sun began to shine again, and the larks to sing; it was a beautiful spring.

Then all at once the duckling could flap its wings; they beat the air more strongly than before, and bore it strongly away; and before it well knew how all this happened, it found itself in a great garden, where the elder-trees smelt sweet, and bent their long green branches down to the canals that wound through the region. Oh, here it was so beautiful, such a gladness of spring! and from the thicket came three glorious white swans; they rustled their wings, and swam lightly on the waters. The duckling knew the splendid creatures, and felt oppressed by a peculiar sadness.

"I will fly to them, to the royal birds! and they will kill me, because I that am so ugly dare approach them. But it is of no consequence. Better be killed by *them* than to be pursued by ducks, and beaten by fowls, and pushed about by the girl who takes care of the poultry-yard, and to suffer hunger in winter!" And it flew into the water, and swam towards the beautiful swans; these looked at it, and came sailing down upon it with outspread wings. "Kill me!" said the poor creature, and bent its head down upon the water, expecting nothing but death. But what was this, that it saw in the clear water? It beheld its own image; and lo! it was no longer a clumsy dark-gray bird, ugly and hateful to look at—but a swan.

It felt quite glad at all the need and misfortune it had suffered, now it realized its happiness in all the splendor that surrounded it. And the great swans swam round it, and stroked it with their beaks.

Into the garden came little children who threw bread and corn into the water; and the youngest cried, "There is a new one!"

and the other children shouted joyously, "Yes, a new one has arrived!" And they clapped their hands and danced about; and bread and cake were thrown into the water; and they all said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all! so young and handsome!" and the old swans bowed their heads before him. Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wings, for he did not know what to do, he was so happy, and yet not at all proud. He thought how he had been persecuted and despised; and now he heard them saying that he was the most beautiful of all birds. Even the alder-tree bent its branches straight down into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and mild. Then his wings rustled, he lifted his slender neck, and cried rejoicingly from the depths of his heart, "I never dreamed of so much happiness when I was still the ugly duckling!"—*Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales.*

BEES' FLOUR.

Bees use the pollen of flowers as food for their young, and it is very interesting to watch them collecting it when several flowers of a kind grow in a cluster. They go systematically to one after another, until from each they have obtained their share of the precious yellow powder. First with her hard bony jaws the bee rasps and scrapes the pollen from the anther, and then seizing it with her fore feet deposits it very dexterously on the thighs of her hinder legs, which are flattened and covered with feathery hairs to which the pollen adheres. She works very diligently, and does not stop for an instant until she has accumulated on each thigh a bundle as big as she can possibly carry.

R. H.

CATERPILLAR HOUSES.

The construction of nests for concealment is not confined to the social caterpillars, but extends to a large number of solitary species. I am inclined to believe the habit universal among the skippers, or lowest family of butterflies. Some of them live in the interior of stems of living plants; others in slight nests formed by weaving together several upright blades of grass; others, and these are generally some of the larger species like the white-spotted skipper, draw several leaves together just as they grow upon the plant, and, retaining them in the desired place by silken bands, live within the leaf-bower.—"*Butterflies*," by S. H. Scudder.

There is an abundant moss, common everywhere, the fruit of which is ripe about the first of June. It grows on the ground, on stone walls, or even on the roofs of old houses. Late in the winter one sees delicate, needle-like spires running up from the dense, velvety green cushions; soon each little needle swells out at its end into a little green head, which finally becomes of a dark red, or purple-red color. By the middle of May the smooth, slender cap falls off, leaving the conic lid. After the lid has fallen, and the spores escaped, the cylindrical capsule turns brown, and becomes ribbed, in which condition it remains all summer. C. H. C.

Every duty well done adds to the moral and spiritual stature. Each opportunity grasped and used is the key to larger privileges.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, 45 Spring Lane, Canton, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

BEHEADINGS.

1. Behead a word meaning a hollow metallic vessel which rings when struck, and leave an old measure for cloth.
2. Behead a word meaning an outer garment, and leave a cereal grass and its edible grain.
3. Behead a word meaning a title of courtesy in Spain, and leave a preposition.
4. Behead a word meaning anxiety, and leave a part of the body.
5. Behead a word meaning a snare, and leave a preposition.

II.

CHANGED INITIALS.

Example: Change to move off to a connoisseur.

Answer: Budge—Judge.

1. Change a male deer to chance.
2. Change an atom to frozen fluid.
3. Change a mound to a little width.
4. Change a public building to a name.
5. Change anger to the native form of a metal.
6. Change a contest in running to a fabric of fine thread.
7. Change to produce, as fruit, to intimately.

When the changes have been rightly made and the words written one below another, the initial letters will spell the name of an American President.

III.

A DIAMOND.

1. A consonant.
2. To sketch.
3. A country.
4. A highwayman.
5. A consonant.

IV.

JUMBLED FLOWERS.

1. Ydagahenr.
2. Vclreo.
3. Seteora.
4. Thyihcan.
5. Rstabeahybb.

—Selected.

V.

NUMERICAL PUZZLE.

- 6, 18, 5, 4, 5, 18, 9, 3, 20, 7, 18, 5, 5, 8, 1, 12, 7, 5. A Governor of Massachusetts.
- 8, 1, 18, 18, 9, 19, 15, 14, 7, 18, 1, 25, 15, 20, 9, 19. A United States Senator from Massachusetts.
- 15, 12, 9, 22, 5, 18, 23, 5, 14, 4, 5, 12, 12, 8, 15, 12, 13, 5, 19. A Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.
- 3, 1, 12, 5, 2, 3, 21, 19, 8, 9, 14, 7. An Attorney-General of the United States.
- 10, 1, 13, 5, 19, 1, 7, 1, 18, 6, 9, 5, 12, 4. A President of the United States.

Answers to puzzles in the April number.

- I. USEFUL IN EVERY HOUSEHOLD.—1. Pear's Soap. 2. Rubifoam. 3. Knabe Pianos. 4. Royal Baking Powder. 5. Mellin's Food. 6. Armour's Extract of Beef. 7. Electro-Silicon. 8. Scott's Emulsion. 9. Cuticura. 10. Blooker's Dutch Cocoa. 11. Huckin's Soups. 12. Chocolate Menier. 13. Hammond Typewriter. 14. Corticelli Silk. 15. Castoria. 16. Davis' Pain Killer. 17. Christy Bread Knife. 18. Vose Pianos. 19. Kodak Cameras. 20. The Caligraph.

II. CHARACTERISTIC INITIALS.—1. William T. Sherman. 2. Patrick Henry. 3. Henry D. Thoreau. 4. James Otis. 5. John Greenleaf Whittier.

III. SOBRIQUETS.—1. George III. of England. 2. Bayard. 3. Charlotte Brontë. 4. Zachary Taylor. 5. Elizabeth of England.

IV. CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.—Bismarck.

V. TWISTED TREES.—1. Peach. 2. Pear. 3. Oak. 4. Elm. 5. Maple. 6. Fir. 7. Pine. 8. Spruce. 9. Tamarack. 10. Apple.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

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The regular monthly meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange will be omitted during the summer.

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